

REMARKS

The present amendment is intended to clearly place the case in condition for allowance. More specifically, the only claims that remain pending after this response are those that have been allowed or indicated as allowable and new claims dependent therefrom.

Claims 9, 15–20, and 31–85 were pending in the application. Claims 1–8, 10–14, and 21–30 have been previously canceled. With this response, claims 9, 31–44, 55, 56, 59, and 61 are canceled and claims 86–120 are added. Thus, claims 15–20, 45–54, 57, 59, and 61–120 are pending after this action.

Claims 9, 15–20, 31–55, 58, 60, 62–66, 76–78, and 83 stand rejected. Claims 56, 57, 59, 61, 69–75, and 79–83 stand objected to. Claims 67, 68, 84, and 85 are allowed. Applicant gratefully acknowledges allowance of claims 67, 68, 84, and 85 and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims of this application.

The Office Action on page 11 states that claims 69 and 79 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant notes that claims 69 and 79 are independent claims, and are not dependent on any rejected base claim. There is no rejection of independent claims 69 and 79. Therefore, Applicant believes that independent claims 69 and 79, and their dependent claims, are allowed. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the confirmation of the allowed status by Examiner Bottorff in a telephone conference that was held on October 25, 2004.

The Office Action objects to the drawings for including informally drawn circles around various components. Applicant respectfully notes that two sets of amended drawings were submitted on May 20, 2004. One set of drawings contained annotations in ink of the changes that were made to the drawings, consistent with MPEP § 608.02(v) and the Sample Format for Revised Amendment Practice, available at

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/opla/preognotice/formatrevamdtprac.pdf>. The second set of drawings did not have the annotations in ink. Applicant respectfully submits that the second set of drawings, without the annotations, is acceptable. Another copy of the set of drawings without annotations is included as an Appendix to this communication.

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With this amendment, claims 15, 57, 59, 61, 62, 76, and 80 have been amended to overcome the objections set forth in the "Allowable Subject Matter" section of the Office Action. Claim 15 was amended to overcome the objection to claim 56. The Office Action indicates that claims 56, 57, 59, 61, 69-75, 79, 84, and 85 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 69 and 79, and claims dependent therefrom, are allowed, as discussed above. Claims 84 and 85 are indicated elsewhere as allowed, so Applicant presumes that the listing of these claims as objected to was inadvertent error. The allowance of claims 84 and 85 was confirmed by Examiner Bottorff in the telephone conference that was held on October 25, 2004.

Claim 15 is amended to include the limitations of claim 56 and any intervening claims, effectively rewriting allowable claim 56 in independent format including the limitations of the independent claim and any intervening claims. The dependency of claim 57 was changed to reflect the amendment to claim 15. Claim 59 is amended to include the limitations of claim 58 and any intervening claims. Claim 61 is amended to include the limitations of claim 60 and any intervening claims.

The Office Action further indicates that claim 82 as it depends from claims 62, 67, 69, 76, and 79 and claim 83 as it depends from claims 69 and 79 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 67 is otherwise indicated as allowed, so it is believed that the objection to claim 82 as it depends from claim 67 is inadvertent error. As discussed above, claims 69 and 79 have been confirmed as allowed. Thus it is believed that the objection to claims 82 and 83 as they depend from claims 69 and 79 is inadvertent error. Claims 62 and 76 are amended to include the limitations of claim 82 and any intervening claims. Claim 82 is amended to reflect the changed dependence from claims 62 and 76.

The status of claim 83 as it depends from claim 76 is not clear. It is presumed that the claim is objected to as dependent from a rejected base claim and this is the status of claim 83 applied to the other claims from which it depends. As set forth herein, it is believed that

amended independent claim 76 is now allowable; thus, claim 83 as it depends from claim 76 is allowable. Also, new independent claim 86 is added that incorporates the limitations of claim 83 and any intervening claim into the limitations of independent claim 76 before the amendment of claim 76. Claims 87 and 88 are added as dependent from claim 86, similar to claims 77 and 78.

The Office Action indicates that claims 80, 81, 82 as it depends from claims 80 and 81, and 83 as it depends from claims 80 and 81 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, set forth in the Office Action. The Office Action asserts that there is insufficient antecedent basis in independent claim 80 for “the cross bars.” Applicant amends independent claim 80 to insert sufficient antecedent basis for “the cross bars” and does not narrow the claim by so doing.

Claim 77 has been amended to correct its dependency.

New claims 87–120 have been added. These claims are all dependent on allowed claims or claims that are rewritten to overcome the objections stated in the Office Action. New claims 87–120 are believed to be allowable for at least the reason that they depend from allowed claims or allowable claims (additionally, many of the new claims add to allowed claims or allowable claims additional material deemed to be allowable, thus providing additional bases for patentability).

If the present amendment does not place the case in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to immediately contact the undersigned by telephone to discuss the possibility of an Examiner’s Amendment to immediately place the case in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

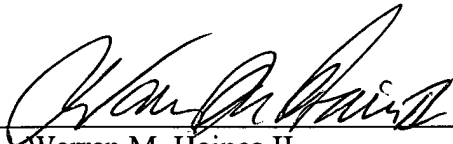
After this amendment, claims 15–20, 45–54, 57, 59, and 61–120 are currently pending in the application. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claims 67, 68, 84, and 85 and confirmation of allowance of claims 69–75 and 79. In view of the above remarks and

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amendments, it is submitted that claims 15-20, 45-54, 57, 59, 61-66, 76-78, 80-83, and new claims 86-120 are also in condition for allowance. Prompt notice of allowance of all pending claims—15-20, 45-54, 57, 59, and 61-120—is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX